

2009

Louisiana

Agricultural Statistics

Compiled by
The Louisiana Field Office
of
The United States Department of Agriculture
National Agricultural Statistics Service

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The support and cooperation of Louisiana's farmers, ranchers and agribusinesses are the foundation for accurate and reliable agricultural statistics. The entire staff of the National Agricultural Statistics Service's Louisiana Field Office, along with the enumerators of the National Association of State Departments of Agriculture (NASDA) who collect the data, would like to express our great appreciation to the many individuals and operations that provided the survey data to make this publication and the estimates it contains possible.

The 2009 Louisiana Agricultural Statistics bulletin provides a wealth of economic, crop, livestock and weather data for the state as a whole. Additionally, for major commodities, the bulletin provides parish level estimates for the years 2005-2009. The historical section of the bulletin, published every five years, contains state level statistics dating as far back as 1866.

Funding for the publication of 2009 Louisiana Agricultural Statistics was provided by the Louisiana State University Department of Agricultural Economics and Agribusiness.

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The USDA-National Agricultural Statistics Service, Louisiana Field Office publishes the Louisiana Agricultural Statistics bulletin through cooperative agreements between the USDA - National Agricultural Statistics Service's Louisiana Field Office and the Louisiana Department of Agriculture and Forestry. Louisiana State University AgCenter and Extension Service and Southern University Extension have provided tremendous assistance in compiling data within this report. Enclosed in this publication are parish and state level estimates for specified agricultural commodities in this state along with revisions to parish level data from our 2007 Census of Agriculture.

Unlike in 2008 when hurricanes Gustav and Ike ripped through the state devastating crops, the 2009 crop year was virtually weather event-free except for some dry weather early in the growing season. Most crops progressed well during the 2009 growing season aided by some irrigation where dry field conditions made it necessary for crop development. Late season rains hampered harvest of late season crops especially soybeans.

Rice producers were able to get most of their ratoon crop harvested, setting a record high yield, while the sweet potato crop was virtually destroyed again by very wet and often times flooded fields. This is at least the second crop in consecutive years that the sweet potato crop has been almost destroyed by weather conditions. Corn producers had an above average year with yield and prices improving from last year. Sugarcane producers had a somewhat normal year with crop condition slightly above normal up until the wet harvest period and prices were holding steady. Pecan production was considerably less going into their off-year while rebounding from the storms of 2008.

We thank all Louisianans who have participated in the March, June, September, December Agricultural Surveys, Monthly Crop Yield surveys, January and July Cattle Surveys, Cotton Objective Yield Survey, January and July Sheep and Goat Surveys along with a number of other surveys conducted on an annual basis. Producers were under tremendous amount of stress making decisions on whether or not to plant crops or which crops to plant depending on land conditions and crop prices. USDA-NASS, Louisiana Field Office was able to provide valuable information to producers during critical decision-making periods because of your cooperation on the annual and monthly surveys that are conducted by this office.

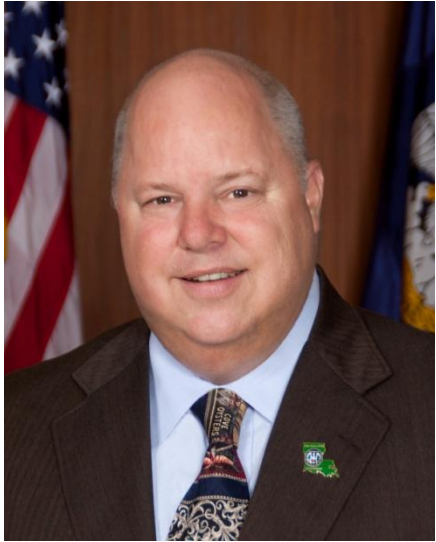
Data included in this publication represent numerous agricultural, and economic surveys completed by a multitude of Louisiana producers over the years. Without the cooperation of agricultural producers, agri-business and private industry these data series would not be possible. Thank you again for your participation.

The Louisiana Field Office is a state office within the National Agricultural Statistics Service which is the agency charged with providing agricultural statistics for the United States Department of Agriculture.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads 'Nathan Crisp'.

Nathan L. Crisp

Director



Message from Commissioner Strain

The Louisiana agriculture and forestry industry, valued at more than \$8.3 billion, remains one of the largest economic drivers of the state. The number is impressive but it is the lowest value of Louisiana's agricultural economy since 2002.

Poultry and forestry, the state's two largest agricultural industries, declined 25 percent in value, and row crop farmers suffered from lingering devastation caused by hurricanes Gustav and Ike and an extremely wet 2009 harvest season. Stress on agriculture will continue, not only from Mother Nature, but also from societal pressure.

Sociologists expect the United States population to grow by more than 100 million in the next 30 years. The population increase will result in less available land for agriculture but a great need for food, fiber and bioenergy. The average age of today's farmer is 57 and new farming families are adding only nine percent to the gross farm economy.

Still, I am confident that our nation's farmers, foresters and ranchers will meet the challenge. More importantly for Louisiana, I believe our producers and agribusinesses are in a unique position to capitalize on these growing needs. About 60 percent of the nation's grain exports pass through south Louisiana ports. The Mississippi River port system is the world's largest in tonnage. Louisiana is blessed with a long growing season, abundant resources and proximity to ports, rail and interstate transportation systems.

Total expenses for farming families are expected to remain static for the next year but farm commodity prices are expected to rise. All wealth is based on agriculture. With a lot of hard work and a little luck, the Louisiana farmer, forester and rancher will persevere and ultimately thrive.

I will continue to advocate for the preservation of a strong agricultural base in Louisiana and our nation. Indeed, the preservation of our farm economy is not only a matter of economic development but also our national security. Ultimately, I believe the American food, fiber and forestry producer will prevail.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink that reads "Mike Strain". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Mike" being more prominent.

Mike Strain, DVM
Commissioner